

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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USOECD

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TAGS: OVIP OCON OECD
SUBJ: SYG'S PROPOSES INCREASE IN OECD CONTACTS WITH
MEMBER GOVERNMENTS' PARLIAMENTS

SUMMARY: SECRETARY GENERAL VAN LENNEP, CITING NEW
LEGISLATIVE BRANCH INTEREST IN INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC
AFFAIRS, BELIEVES THE TIME HAS COME FOR INCREASED OECD
CONTACT WITH PARLIAMENTS OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS. HE IS
THUS TAKING SOUNDINGS ON THE LAUNCHING OF A SERIES OF
PARLIAMENTARY CONFERENCES AT OECD WHICH WOULD BE
ADVISORY IN NATURE ON DISCREET IMPORTANT INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC ISSUES (E.G., ENERGY, NORTH-SOUTH, ECONOMIC
GROWTH/INFLATION/EMPLOYMENT). THE FIRST SUCH CONFERENCE
COULD BE THIS FALL, AND WOULD BE FOLLOWED FROM
TIME TO TIME AS NEEDED, AND SEEK PARTICIPATION FROM
MEMBER CAPITALS OF KEY PARLIAMENTARY MEMBERS IN THE
SUBJECT AREA OF DISCUSSION. VAN LENNEP PLANS TO
PURSUE THIS IDEA IN HIS DISCUSSIONS WITH ADMINISTRATION
AND CONGRESSIONAL FIGURES DURING HIS VISIT TO WASHINGTON.
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REACTION TO VAN LENNEP'S PROPOSAL. END SUMMARY.

1. IN CONJUNCTION WITH SECRETARY GENERAL VAN LENNEP'S
SCHEDULED VISIT TO WASHINGTON IN SEPTEMBER (SEPTTEL),
THE MISSION WOULD LIKE TO PROVIDE THE DEPARTMENT WITH
BACKGROUN INFORMATION CONCERNING HIS INTEREST IN
DEVELOPING OECD CONTACTS ON AN ADVISORY, AD HOC BASIS,

WITH MEMBER GOVERNMENTS' PARLIAMENTS. VAN LENNEP WILL WANT TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT WITH APPROPRIATE EXECUTIVE BRANCH AND CONGRESSIONAL FIGURES WHILE THERE.

2. IN INFORMAL CONVERSATION WITH HEADS OF DELEGATION-- HE ALSO DISCUSSED IDEA WITH SENATOR JAVITS DURING HIS MOST RECENT VISIT HERE--THE SECRETARY GENERAL OUTLINED THE HISTORY OF OECE PARLIAMENTARY CONTACT OVER THE YEARS, WHICH HE BELIEVES HAS BEEN BENEFICIAL, BUT INADEQUATE; PARTICULARLY IN VIEW OF THE MAJOR ROLE OF SOME PARLIAMENTS IN FORMULATION OF MEMBER GOVERNMENTS' POLICIES HAVING AN EFFECT ON THE INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT.

3. RECOUNTING THE HISTORY OF THIS SUBJECT, VAN LENNEP NOTED THAT WHEN THE OECD WAS ESTABLISHED, A PARLIAMENTARY RELATIONSHIP WITH THE NEW ORGANIZATION WAS DISCUSSED AT LENGTH. THE DESIRE OF MANY EUROPEANS AT THE TIME WAS TO BUILD SUCH CONTACT ONTO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE'S PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY (OPPOSED AT THE TIME BY THE U.S. AND CANADA). IN FACT THE OECD'S CONTINUATION EVEN TODAY OF THE ORGANIZATION FOR EUROPEAN ECONOMIC COOPERATION'S (OEEC) SYSTEM OF REPORTING REGULARLY TO THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY STEMS FROM THIS DESIRE. THERE HAVE ALSO BEEN INTERMITTENT OECD CONTACTS WITH THE ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY, NATO'S PARLIAMENTARY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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TARY BODY, MAINLY IN THE FORM OF RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THAT ASSEMBLY ON ECONOMIC QUESTIONS BEING TAKEN UP IN OECD, BUT THERE IS OBVIOUSLY NO REPEAT NO FORMAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE TWO BODIES.

4. THE SECRETARY GENERAL BELIEVES THAT NEITHER THAT CONTACT WITH THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ASSEMBLY; NOR CONTACT WITH THE ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY ARE OR COULD BE DEVELOPED INTO A SATISFACTORY SOLUTION TO THE NEED FOR A MUTUAL FLOW OF INFORMATION BETWEEN PARLIAMENTS AND THE ORGANIZATION. HE IS ALSO OPPOSED TO CREATION OF A FORMAL STANDING PARLIAMENTARY BODY OF OECD (ALONG LINES OF ATLANTIC ASSEMBLY). SUCH AN ARRANGEMENT COULD BECOME A STERILE EXERCISE IN "RESOLUTION PASSING". FURTHERMORE, IT WOULD NOT INSURE THE PARTICIPATION OF THE RIGHT PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM EACH CAPITAL, COMPETENT IN THE SPECIFIC ECONOMIC AREAS THAT MIGHT COME UP FOR DISCUSSION WITH OECD.

5. THE SECRETARY GENERAL PREFERS PARLIAMENTARY MEETINGS TO BE ADVISORY IN NATURE, AND TO DEAL WITH SPECIFIC SUBJECTS SUCH AS THE 1969 MEETING ON DEVELOP-

MENT ASSISTANCE HELD AT THE OECD, WHICH WAS QUITE
SUCCESSFUL BECAUSE MANY OF THOSE ATTENDING HAD
A PARLIAMENTARY ROLE ON THE SUBJECT.

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6. IN VAN LENNEP'S VIEW, FROM "TIME TO TIME" PARLIA-
MENTARY MEETINGS SHOULD BE HELD AT THE OECD IN SIMILAR
FASHION TO DISCUSS A PARTICULAR SUBJECT. PARLIAMENT-
TARIANS WULD BE INFORMED ABOUT THE ISSUES AND WORK
GOING ON IN THE OECD. PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATIONS WOULD
IN TURN FEED IN DIRECTLY THEIR VIEWS ON THE ISSUES
AND ESPECIALLY THE POLITICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH MIGHT
OTHERWISE BE MISSED BY THE OECD.
SUCH EXCHANGES ON SPECIFIC ISSUES WOULD INCREASE PAR-
LIAMENTARY UNDERSTANDING OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF KEY
INTERNATIONAL ISSUES, AND WOULD AT THE SAME TIME OPEN
THE OECD'S EYES TO THE REALITIES OF INTERNAL POLITICAL
CONCERNS OF LEGISLATIVE BODIES.

7. THIS "TOPICAL" APPROACH TO OECD/PARLAIMENTS
CONSULTATION, WHILE PERHAPS ELGITIMATELY LIABLE TO
CRITICISM THAT MEETINGS COULD DEGENERATE INTO SEMINARS,
WOULD ACCORDING TO VAN LENNEP BE MUCH MORE USEFUL THAN
THE "RESOLUTION PASSING" EXERCISES OF AN "ATLANTIC
ASSEMBLY" TYPE ARRANGEMENT CITED PARA 4 ABOVE.

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8. THE MAJOR ADVANTAGE OF THE "TOPICAL" CONFERENCE WOULD BE THAT OF BRINGING TO SUCH MEETINGS THREE OR FOUR PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM EACH COUNTRY COMPETENT IN THE SUBJECT. A DISADVANTAGE--CITED TO VAN LENNEP BY SENATOR JAVITS--IN TAKING SUCH AN APPROACH WOULD BE A LACK OF CONTINUITY AMONG THOSE ATTENDING AND THEREFORE THE MEETINGS WOULD NOT SERVE TO BUILD UP A NUCLEUS OF PARLIAMENTARY SUPPORTS OF OECD IN EACH CAPITAL. IN OUR VIEW THIS DISADVANTAGE COULD BE COUNTERACTED BY INVITING AT LEAST ONE KEY OECD SUPPORTER, DRAWN FROM THE "NUCLEUS" OF THOSE INTERESTED IN OECD, TO ALL MEETINGS.

9. INFORMAL HEADS OF DELEGATION REACTION TO THE SECRETARY GENERAL'S PROPOSAL THUS FAR HAS BEEN POSITIVE. IN DISCUSSION CONCERNING POSSIBLE SUBJECTS FOR SUCH MEETINGS, ONE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE SUGGESTED ENERGY AS A POSSIBLE FIRST TOPIC. OTHER POSSIBILITIES COULD INCLUDE 1) "GENERAL ECONOMIC POLICY" IN LIGHT OF THE OECD STRATEGY FOR SUSTAINED ECONOMIC EXPANSION, 2) THE "NORTH/SOUTH DIALOGUE", OR PERHAPS 3) "YOUTH EMPLOYMENT".

THE SECRETARY GENERAL BELIEVES THAT RISING SENSITIVITY IN DOMESTIC POLITICAL AFFAIRS TOWARDS INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC ISSUES NOW MAKES THESE PROPOSED MEETINGS MORE INTERESTING TO PARLIAMENTS AND NOW IS THE TIME TO PROCEED. A FIRST MEETING COULD BE HELD AS SOON AS IS FEASIBLE, PERHAPS THIS FALL, WITH SUBSEQUENT MEETINGS TO BE HELD AS ADVISABLE.

10. COMMENT: OUR INITIAL REACTION TO VAN LENNEP'S PROPOSAL IS FAVORABLE IN PRINCIPLE PROVIDED THE MEETINGS

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ARE ADVISORY IN NATURE AND DO NOT INCLUDE CONGRESSIONAL PARTICIPATION AS DELEGATES TO OTHER OECD MEETINGS. WHILE DETAILS NEED TO BE WORKED OUT TO ENSURE PROPER COORDINATION BETWEEN GOVERNMENTS, THEIR PARLIAMENT AND THE OECD, THE BENEFIT TO BE GAINED FOR THE USG IN CAREFULLY PREPARED INCREASED CONGRESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE AND PARTICIPATION IN OECD ACTIVITIES WOULD SEEM TO US TO OUTWEIGHT ANY DISADVANTAGE. WE WOULD APPRECIATE HAVING WASHINGTON'S COMMENTS ON THE DESIRABILITY OF VAN LENNEP'S PROPOSAL. SALZMAN

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